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ABSTRACT

Unexpected absences from work that arise when employees are faced with children's illnesses or breakdowns in their regular child care arrangements cause a tremendous amount of stress for working families and losses in productivity businesses. Interest in emergency child care programs appears to be increasing. This report examines the increasing need for back-up care and sick child care programs and describes five existing employer-sponsored or hospital-based programs. Following an introduction, the report provides a rationale for emergency care, noting child-care related absenteeism, costs and licensing requirements, and issues related to sick child care. The report notes that the two concepts of back-up or contingency care and sick child care can be combined into one program. The next section of the report examines licensing and regulations, and the implications for emergency care, noting that without certain exemptions, regulations effectively prohibit casual arrangements for drop-in and emergency care. The rest of the report describes the characteristics of five emergency care programs: (1) Time Warner Children's Center, providing back-up care on-site; (2) Honeywell, which contracts with in-home care providers for sick child care; (3) Connecticut's Care in a Crunch, providing in-home sick child and back-up care for children as well as care for convalescing adults; (4) sick child care programs at Sarasota (Florida) Memorial Hospital and St. Joseph Hospital in Houston, Texas; and (5) A Rainbow Retreat in Orange County, California, which offers both back-up and sick child care in three different centers. (WP)